

# WIAS&S



Wandsworth Information, Advice & Support Service

Providing an Impartial Service to Children and Young People (aged 0-25)  
with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities and their Parents or Carers



# Confidentiality Policy

**CONFIDENTIAL  
IMPARTIAL  
FREE**

**Information,  
Advice & Support  
Services Network**  
*for SEND*



## Introduction

Wandsworth Information, Advice & Support Service (WASS) provides a confidential, impartial, information, advice, and support service to children and young people (0-25) with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and their parents/carers. A young person in this case is defined as an individual over compulsory school age (16) and under 25.

The role of WASS is to ensure parents/carers, children and young people have access to confidential and impartial information, advice and support so they can make informed decisions related to SEND.

Any information shared with us is in confidence and is protected under common law and the Data Protection Act 1998. WASS generally works with parents/carers, children or young people who contact the service themselves. Parents/carers or young people can also be referred to the service via another agency or organisation.

WASS can only accept referrals if the parents/carers and/or young person are aware of the referral and have given their permission for their personal information to be passed on to WASS.

## What is Confidentiality?

Confidentiality is when information is not shared with anyone without the consent of the person who is giving the information. This consent can be given verbally or in writing.

## Consent to Keep Confidential Records

All information given to WASS staff is treated confidentially. There may be times when it would be helpful to share information with schools and other services but we will only do this with your permission. Before recording any information about a family WASS staff will discuss with parents/carers or the young person what information is to be held, the reason why this information is kept and get their consent to do so. All records containing confidential information are only accessible to WASS staff. If parents/carers or a young person do not wish to give personal information this is respected.

Sometimes, in order to help parents/carers, it is useful for WASS to discuss a situation with another professional, for example an educational psychologist, a caseworker from the special needs assessment section (SNAS) or a school/college or early years provider. Parents/carers and young people **will always be asked for permission verbally** before WASS staff speak to anyone else on their behalf or look at or obtain reports/documents held by SNAS or any other service.

WASS will initially record personal details about a family and the child/young person with SEND about whom the contact has been made. Subsequently, they will keep concise and factual records on conversations that they have had and any letters/emails that have been sent or received. WASS staff make a note of calls so that information does not have to be repeated. It also helps us to monitor the service.

How WASS records and stores this information is explained in the Wandsworth Information, Advice & Support Service Data Protection policy that should be read with this document.



## Sharing Information

All information and files that W&ASS holds about families are treated in confidence and are not shared with anyone outside the service without the consent of a parent/carer, child or young person. There are some exceptions where information may be shared without consent and these are:

- There is concern about an individual (child, young person or adult) being harmed or there is a child or adult at risk safeguarding issue.
- The information relates to criminal activity.
- The court orders that the information is shared.

Where any of these apply, W&ASS staff will, wherever possible, let parents/carers or the young person know that they are going to share information with someone else. However if there is a possibility of an immediate risk to a child, young person, adult at risk, parent/carer or a member of staff then agreement will not be sought.

Please refer to the W&ASS Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk policy for further information.

## Volunteer Independent Parental Supporters (IPSs)

As part of their work with parents/carers volunteer IPSs are aware of, record and hold personal information about families that they are working with. As part of their agreement with W&ASS, volunteer IPSs will keep any information that they hold as confidential and will not share it with anyone outside the service without first getting the parents'/carers' permission. The only exceptions to this are where:

- There is concern about an individual (child, young person or adult) being harmed or there is a child or adult at risk safeguarding issue.
- The information relates to criminal activity.
- The court orders that the information is shared.

If any of these conditions ever apply, the volunteer IPS will first discuss the situation and agree with W&ASS staff what needs to be done before sharing any information. Wherever possible, parents/carers will also be told that their information is going to be shared with someone outside of the service. However if there is a possibility of an immediate risk to child, young person, adult at risk, parent/carer or a member of staff then agreement will not be sought.

Please refer to the W&ASS Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk policy for further information.

## Ensuring the Effectiveness of our Confidentiality Policy

- All W&ASS staff and volunteer IPSs receive training on W&ASS' confidentiality policy.
- W&ASS' confidentiality policy is shared with the local authority and other agencies to make them aware of the confidential nature of our service.
- W&ASS ensures that parents/carers and young people are informed about our confidential nature from first contact with our service through our welcome letter and data protection and confidentiality sheet.
- Our confidentiality policy is reviewed annually by W&ASS advisory group.

**This policy was last updated in March 2017.**



## How to contact us:

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**Advice line: 020 8871 5237** (school term time only)

Monday: 10am -1pm, Wednesday: 1.30-4.30pm, Friday: 10am-1pm.



**Call back service: 020 8871 8065**

(24 hour answer machine)



**Email: [wias@wandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:wias@wandsworth.gov.uk)**



**Web: [www.wandsworth.gov.uk/wias](http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/wias)**

